

REMARKS

Applicant appreciates the time taken by the Examiner to review Applicant's present application. This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Official Action mailed October 2, 2006. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Claim Status

Claims 1-43 were pending. Claims 1-30, 32-33 and 38 were rejected. Claims 30, 34-37 and 39-43 were objected to as being allowable but for depending from a rejected base claim. Claims 1, 18, 25 and 28 are amended herein. Claims 2-17, 19-24 and 29-43 are cancelled. Claims 44-56 are new. Through these changes, Claims 1, 18, 25-28 and 44-56 are pending.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 101

Claims 1-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101.

Claims 1 and 18 have been amended. Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1 and 18 comport with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 101. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 32-43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Claims 32-43 have been cancelled. Applicants respectfully submit this rejection is now moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-3, 5-6, 18-20, 23 and 28-30 stand rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,618,430 ("Khaleghi").

Claims 1-2, 5-9, 12-15, 18-22, 28-29, 32-33 and 38 stand rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,450,395 ("Hostetter").

As Claim 4 was not rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102, Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of Claim 4 and the limitations of all intervening claims from which Claim 4 depends. Likewise, as Claim 24 was not rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102, Claim 18 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of Claim 24 and the limitations of all intervening claims from which Claim 24 depends. Likewise, as Claim 31 was not rejected under 35 U.S.C. §

102, Claim 28 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of Claim 31 and the limitations of all intervening claims from which Claim 31 depends. Claims 2-17, 19-24 and 29-43 have been cancelled. Applicant respectfully submits that because of the aforementioned claims amendments and cancellations, this rejection is now moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim Objections

Claims 31, 34-37 and 39-43 were objected to as depending from a rejected base claim.

Claims 31-43 have been cancelled. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

New Claims

Claim 44 incorporates the limitations of Claim 10 and the limitations of all intervening claims from which Claim 10 depends. Because Claim 10 was not rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 44 is novel in light of the cited prior art. Claim 46 incorporates the limitations of Claim 16 and the limitations of all intervening claims from which Claim 16 depends. Because Claim 16 was not rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 46 is novel in light of the cited prior art. Claim 48 incorporates the limitations of Claim 34 and the limitations of all intervening claims from which Claim 10 depends. Because Claim 34 was not rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 48 is novel in light of the cited prior art. Claim 52 incorporates the limitations of Claim 39 and the limitations of all intervening claims from which Claim 39 depends. Because Claim 39 was not rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 52 is novel in light of the cited prior art. For similar reasons, Applicant submits that the newly added dependent claims are also novel in light of the cited prior art.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above claim amendments, applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw his/her rejections of Claims 1, 18 and 28, and the respective dependant claims. New Claims 44-56 are submitted to be novel over the cited prior art. Applicant has now made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. Other than as explicitly set forth above, this reply does not include an acquiescence to statements, assertions, assumptions, conclusions, or any combination thereof in the Office Action. For the foregoing reasons and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicant respectfully requests full allowance of Claims 1, 18 and 25-28. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number listed below for prompt action in the event any issues remain.

An extension of one (1) month is requested and a Notification of Extension of Time Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 with the appropriate fee is enclosed herewith.

The Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-3183 of Sprinkle IP Law Group.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 1/21 2007

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